

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for determining a speech-enabled application to receive a spoken utterance in a multi-context speech enabled environment comprising the steps of:
 - 5 evaluating a plurality of contexts for speech enabled applications based upon an access characteristic;
 - receiving a representation of a spoken utterance; and
 - directing the representation of the spoken utterance to a selected speech enabled application based upon the step of evaluating the contexts.
- 10 2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step, prior to evaluating the contexts, of creating the contexts for the speech enabled applications in the speech enabled environment.
3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of identifying each context based on a persistent grammar, a foreground grammar, or a background grammar for each speech enabled application.
- 15 4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of evaluating contexts comprises prioritizing the contexts based on the access characteristic.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the access characteristic is based on recency of relevant access to the context.
- 20 6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of directing the representation of the spoken utterance to the one of the contexts comprises using a grammar to identify the selected context.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the grammar is a Backus Naur Form grammar.
8. An apparatus for determining a speech-enabled application to receive a spoken utterance in a multi-context speech enabled environment, comprising:
 - a context manager for evaluating a plurality of contexts for speech
 - 5 enabled applications based upon an access characteristic; and
 - a message handler for receiving a representation of a spoken utterance,
 - the context manager receiving the representations of the spoken utterance
 - from the message handler and directing the representation of the spoken utterance
 - to a selected speech enabled application based upon the evaluating of the
 - 10 contexts.
9. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the context manager, prior to evaluating the contexts, creates the contexts for the speech enabled applications in the speech enabled environment.
10. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the context manager identifies each context
- 15 based on a persistent grammar, a foreground grammar, or a background grammar for each speech enabled application.
11. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the context manager prioritizes the contexts based on the access characteristic.
12. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the access characteristic is based on recency of
- 20 relevant access to the context.

13. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the context manager uses a grammar to identify the selected speech enabled application.
14. The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the grammar is a Backus Naur Form grammar.
- 5 15. A computer program product comprising:
a computer usable medium for determining a speech-enabled application to receive a spoken utterance in a multi-context speech enabled environment; and
a set of computer program instructions embodied on the computer useable medium, including instructions to:
10 evaluate contexts for speech enabled applications based upon an access characteristic;
receive a representation of a spoken utterance; and
direct the representation of the spoken utterance to a selected speech
15 enabled application based upon evaluating the contexts.
16. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein the set of computer instructions comprises further instructions, prior to evaluating the contexts, to create the contexts for the speech enabled applications in the speech enabled environment.
- 20 17. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein the set of computer instructions comprises further instructions to identify each context based on a persistent grammar, a foreground grammar, or a background grammar for each speech enabled application.

18. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein the set of computer instructions comprises further instructions to prioritize the contexts based on the access characteristic.
19. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein the access characteristic is based on recency of relevant access to the context.
20. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein the set of computer instructions comprises further instructions to use a grammar to identify the selected context.
21. The computer program product of Claim 20, wherein the grammar is a Backus Naur Form grammar.